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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 002049

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/27/2013  
TAGS: [EAID](#) [I2](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [WFP](#)  
SUBJECT: TFIZ01: MFA PREPARED TO MEET TRILATERALLY WITH USG  
AND UN REPRESENTATIVES; UPDATES FROM ICRC AND WFP TURKEY  
REPRESENTATIVES

REF: ANKARA 1971 AND PREVIOUS

(U) Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission  
Robert Deutsch for reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

1. (U) This cable contains an action request. See para 10.

Summary

2. (C) Feza Ozturk, MFA Head of Department for International Political Organizations called a meeting on March 27 with Mission Disaster Relief Officer (MDRO) and UNHCR Deputy Representative for Turkey to provide a formal and positive response to PRM A/S Dewey's proposal for a trilateral coordination mechanism on humanitarian assistance. MFA also passed on definitive approval to the longstanding U.S. request to site Humanitarian Daily Rations in Turkey, subject to consultation with Turkish authorities on the storage location. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) representative Finn Ruda characterized the situation in northern Iraq as relatively calm, and updated us on ICRC's negotiations with the GOT to establish a temporary presence in Turkey. World Food Program (WFP) Emergency Coordinator John Murray described plans to ship food to northern Iraq and procure wheat flour in Turkey. End Summary.

MFA Agrees to Trilateral Meetings

3. (C) MDRO met with Steven Corliss, the Deputy Turkey Representative for UNHCR, and Feza Ozturk, MFA Head of Department for International Political Organizations, on March 27 at MFA's request. USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) Leader also attended. Ozturk stated that, with some modifications, the GOT had approved A/S Dewey's March 12 proposal that Turkey host an informal structure which would bring together U.S. and Turkish civilians as well as representatives of UN agencies in Turkey to discuss humanitarian assistance issues in Turkey and northern Iraq. Ozturk proposed that these meetings be held at the working level at MFA in Ankara and at the GOT's crisis center in Diyarbakir. The GOT does not now see the need to hold analogous meetings in Silopi, as Dewey had proposed, as civilian authorities in Silopi report to the Regional Governor in Diyarbakir. He stated that MFA did not see this mechanism as a decision-making body, but rather a forum to share information and coordinate activities. For the time being and until/unless NGO applications to transit relief to northern Iraq are approved, the GOT does not envisage NGO participation in these

meetings. The GOT will not publicize these meetings before the media. Ozturk proposed that we hold the first such meeting in Ankara on April 3.

14. (C) Corliss responded that the UN Resident Coordinator was familiar with the U.S. proposal and in principle agreed that this mechanism would be useful. However, Corliss emphasized that, since relief for northern Iraq would be the initial focus of discussion, an agency other than UNHCR should probably serve as the UN's principal interlocutor. Corliss stated that he would seek instructions from the Resident Coordinator as to whether and how the UN would participate in these meetings. MDRO thanked Ozturk for Turkey's positive response, and suggested keeping the structure flexible would enable us to respond to changing needs for coordination. MDRO told Ozturk and Corliss that he would consult within the Embassy on USG representation in Diyarbakir.

15. (C) Ozturk closed the meeting by transmitting the GOT's formal approval of the U.S. request to site HDRs in Turkey. He stated that MFA and the Turkish General Staff would like to be "consulted" as to the storage location for the rations and offered himself as the principal point of contact on this issue.

#### ICRC on Northern Iraq and Negotiations with the GOT

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16. (SBU) MDRO also met with Finn Ruda, Regional Representative for Southeast Europe, on March 27. Ruda characterized the situation in northern Iraq, where ICRC maintains 4 expatriate staff, as relatively calm. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) have left the cities for rural areas, but have in many cases already returned to their homes. They have not moved toward the Turkish border.

17. (C) Ruda told us that MFA had assured him that ICRC would be able to transport relief materials across the Turkish border when there is a need for this assistance. ICRC has not formally requested GOT permission to transport aid yet. However, Ruda opined that access to northern Iraq from Turkey will be difficult at best, and said that ICRC, like other humanitarian organizations is considering alternate transit countries, such as Syria.

18. (C) On ICRC negotiations with the GOT to establish a "temporary operational presence", Ruda expressed frustration at delays in striking a deal, but said that two sides have negotiated an agreement acceptable to ICRC and that he is now waiting for the GOT's final approval on this.

#### WFP on Shipments to Northern Iraq, Local Procurement, and Various Bureaucratic Hassles

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19. (C) WFP Emergency Coordinator John Murray told us that the GOT may be poised to take several large positive decisions on transit of relief for northern Iraq. He said MFA was still considering WFP's request to send 6,000 metric tons of food to northern Iraq. MFA had asked WFP for assurances that the relief would be fairly distributed to Turcoman and Arab IDPs as well as Kurds, and WFP responded that its local staff were responsible for distribution. This response appears to have satisfied MFA. Murray also noted that MFA

was working  
to secure Cabinet approval for a 50,000 metric ton line of  
credit to  
WFP from Turkey,s strategic grain reserves. In addition,  
WFP plans to  
buy 30,000 metric tons of wheat flour in Turkey. Asked  
whether the  
GOT had granted transit permission for this, Murray responded  
that  
WFP could send the food through Syria if Turkey did not give  
permission.  
On transportation assets, Murray told us that WFP has firm  
contracts  
in hand for Turkish trucking companies to deliver food in  
northern  
Iraq. However, WFP continues to run up against bureaucratic  
obstacles  
in Turkey at its warehouse in Gaziantep, and in registering  
as a  
legal entity in Turkey, despite two months of talks with the  
Turkish  
Government on these issues.

Comment/Action Request

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10. (C) At the initial joint meeting with MFA and UN  
agencies, Embassy  
plans to raise the importance of facilitating relief supplies  
across  
the Habur Gate to Iraq and discuss U.S. participation in  
Diyarbakir-  
based meetings. We would welcome Washington guidance on  
other issues  
to be raised in this forum.  
PEARSON